

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)



L-R - C.W. Scott, District Conservationist, Ft. Morgan; Robert Parker, landowner; and Karen Mandujano, Soil Conservationist, Ft. Morgan.

Robert Parker has planted trees on his place every year since 1965. Recently, he has been able to utilize the WHIP program. Robert has some guzzlers on his place and is active in Pheasants Forever. He is a delightful 80+-year-old gentleman who loves to show off his trees and wildlife plantings and tell the history of his place.

The Program

The **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** is a voluntary program that encourages the creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of national, state, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to landowners and others to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their properties.

The major objectives of the program are:

- To improve habitat for declining or at-risk species to avoid further species being listed under the **Endangered Species Act**
- To improve habitat and increase the population of economically important species
- To reduce significant agriculture/wildlife conflicts

The Partnership

Landowners interested in enrolling into the WHIP Program enter into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop wildlife habitat and voluntarily limit future use of the land for a period of time, but retain private ownership.

The Assistance

The WHIP program offers landowners up to 75 percent cost-share for wildlife habitat improvement projects.

NRCS works with the participant to develop a wildlife

habitat development plan. This plan becomes the basis of the cost-share agreement between NRCS and the participant. NRCS provides cost-share payments to landowners under these **agreements that are usually 5 to 10 years in duration**, depending upon the practices to be installed.

There are shorter-term agreements to install practices that are needed to meet wildlife emergencies, as approved by the NRCS State Conservationist. NRCS also provides greater cost-share assistance to landowners who enter into **agreements of 15 years or more** for practices on essential plant and animal habitat.

2003 WHIP Program in Colorado

Applications received _____	147
Dollar value of application received _____	\$1.8M
Contracts approved _____	35
WHIP allocation _____	\$405,000
Cumulative acres under contract _____	13,328
Dollar value of partner and landowner contribution _____	\$245,142
Cumulative acres of wildlife habitat improved _____	83,046
Acres of habitat for threatened/endangered species improved _____	2543

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